

CALTRANS

HOPLAND BYPASS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE HOPLAND BYPASS PROJECT

FALL 2001

Welcome...

to the Hopland Bypass Newsletter

The intent of this newsletter is to provide current information to the public, local community, and governmental agencies on the status of the proposed Hopland Bypass.

This project was initiated to address existing and anticipated traffic congestion on Route 101, in and near the town of Hopland. A bypass facility would separate through-traffic from local traffic, improving traffic operations and safety on the state highway and livability in the community of Hopland. The Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) has ranked the Hopland Bypass and the North Hopland Project priorities two and three after the Willits Bypass. After receiving input from resource agencies and the local community, Caltrans decided in March of 2001 to combine the proposed Hopland Bypass and North Hopland projects. The benefits of combining the projects include coordination between the two projects design studies, addressing cumulative impacts of the two projects in one environmental study, and reduced design costs. The combined Hopland Bypass/North Hopland project along with the Hopland Unit III project, currently in construction, will upgrade the last section of two-lane highway between Willits and the Bay Area to a 4-lane freeway/expressway.

Project Description

Caltrans proposes to construct a 4-lane freeway/expressway from just south of the Russian River Bridge (Bridge No. 10-082) to 1.7 miles north of McNab Creek Bridge (Post Mile 8.8 to 17.6).

Current Activity

Current activities include the gathering and analysis of information needed to prepare a Draft Project Report and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. All property owners adjacent to identified alignments have or will be contacted as needed to request rights of entry for environmental studies. We appreciate all the responses received to date. The Draft Project Report will consider the need and purpose for the project and will analyze the engineering feasibility and cost of

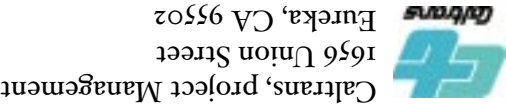
a range of identified alternatives. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement Report will address the biological, physical, social and cultural impacts of identified alternatives. A Draft Relocation Impact Report will also be written at this time, which will describe the impacts to property owners. this document, along with your comments, will be used to help select a preferred alternative. The project is currently in the preliminary engineering/environmental planning stage. It is anticipated that a Draft Project Report with an Environmental Document will be ready for circulation and review by Summer of 2003. The Final Environmental Impact Report/Statement should be completed the following year, at which time funding for design, right-of-way acquisition and construction can be considered. If the project is approved and funding is available, construction is tentatively scheduled to commence in late 2009.

Hopland Bypass Alternatives Identified to Date

Six alternatives are currently being studied; one to the east of Old Hopland, four valley alternatives and the “No Build” alternative. We present these alternatives as a way of initiating a dialogue that will aid in the selection of a preferred alternative. The study of these alternatives by Caltrans does not mean that any of the alternatives are preferred at this time. During the project report/environmental document phase of this process, alternatives will be “fine tuned” to achieve the purpose and need while minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources as well as impacts to the community. In addition, there will be several opportunities for the public to comment on the project and provide suggestions for additional alignments or modifications to existing alignments that should be studied.

The East Alternative

This alignment was developed to minimize impacts on agricultural lands in the valley. Beginning about one mile south of the Russian River Bridge, the East Alternative would traverse the foothills just east of the valley, reconnecting with existing Route 101 just north of the Hopland CDF station. This alternative proposes three interchanges; one at the south end of



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the project, one on Route 175 approximately one half mile east of Old Hopland, and one near the CDF fire station.

The Valley East 1 Alternative

The Valley East 1 Alternative diverges from existing Route 101 just south of the Russian River Bridge. After crossing East Side Road, it proceeds through the valley, crossing Route 175 between the Russian River and East Side Road, then reconnects with existing Route 101 at the same location as the East Alternative, just north of the Hopland CDF fire station. This alternative proposes two interchanges, one at Route 175 and one near the CDF fire station.

The Valley East 2 Alternate

The Valley East 2 Alternative would begin about one mile south of the Russian River bridge. After crossing over East Side Road, it proceeds through the valley, crossing over Route 175 between the Russian River and East Side Road. Immediately after crossing Route 175, it turns west toward Hopland, crosses over the rail road just north of town and proceeds north along the existing alignment to the CDF fire station. This alternative proposes two interchanges, one at the south end of the project and one near the Sundial Ranch.

The Valley East 3 Alternative

The Valley East 3 Alternative begins just south of the Russian River Bridge, following the Valley East 1 alignment until just after it crosses the Russian River. At that point it continues west, crosses over the rail road just south of the Sundial Ranch and continues north along the existing alignment to the CDF station. This alternative proposes two interchanges, one at Route 175 and one near the Sundial Ranch.

The Valley West Alternative

The Valley West Alternative begins approximately one mile south of the Russian River Bridge and crosses the Russian River along the north side of the existing bridge. After crossing the river, it turns northward and roughly parallels the existing route, passing just to the east of the sewage treatment facility and crosses over Route 175 between Hopland and the Russian River. The alignment would then cross over Route 101 just north of Hopland and proceed up the existing alignment to the CDF fire station. This alternative proposes two interchanges, one at the south end and one near the Sundial Ranch.

The “No Build” Alternative

The “No Build” alternative must be considered. It provides a baseline with which to compare the other alternatives.

North Hopland Alternatives Identified to Date

North Hopland is the portion of the project from approximately the Hopland CDF Station to the beginning of the freeway north of Henry Station Road. Alternatives being developed for this portion include both freeway and expressway options. A freeway has access control and grade separation (interchanges) while an expressway has only access control (minimum spacing between at-grade intersections). The alternatives generally run adjacent to or overlie the existing highway. The “No Build” alternative for North Hopland must be considered.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

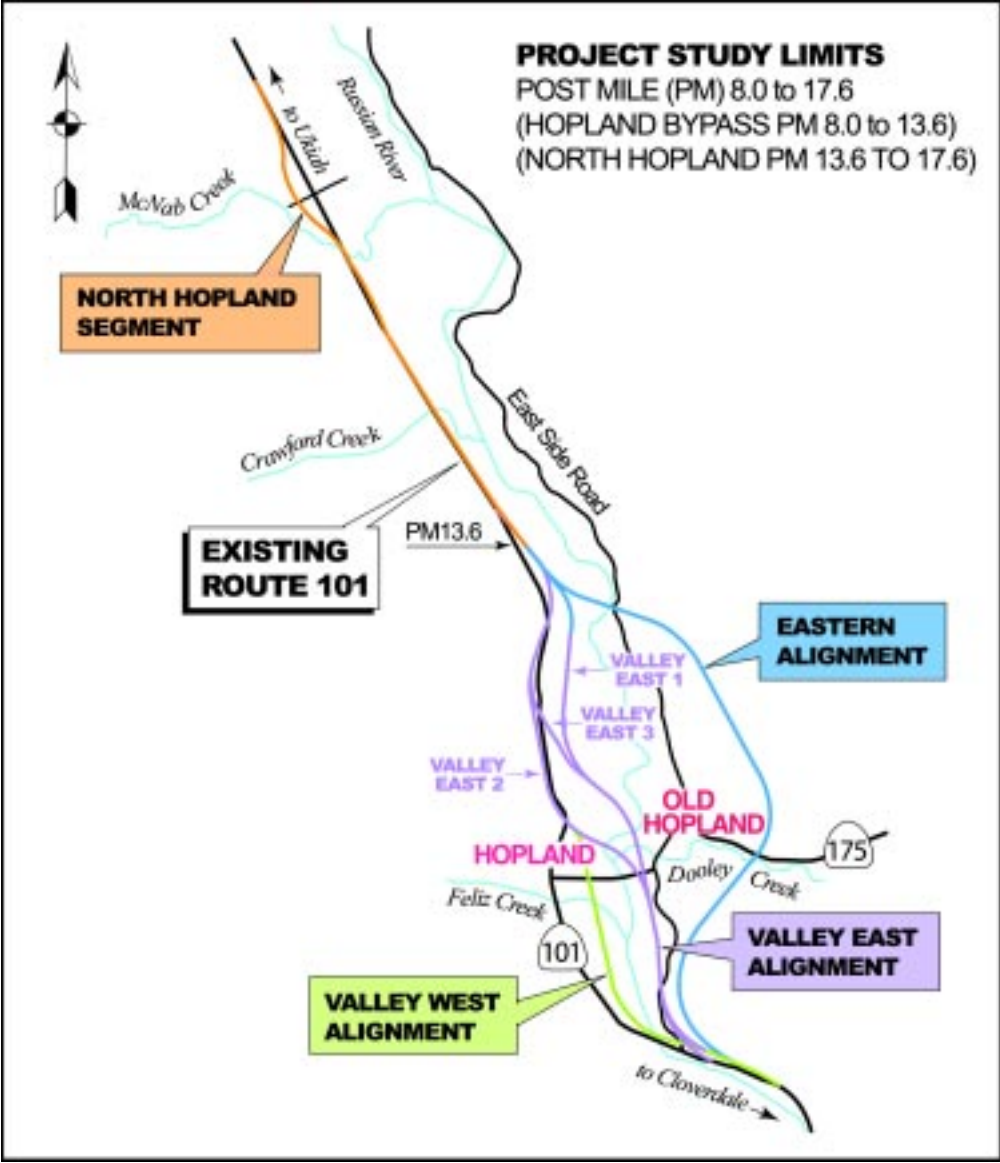
An informational open house was held on October 11, 2000 at the Hopland Elementary School to gather community input and concerns for the project. A second public presentation of the project was made at the Hopland Unit 3 pre-construction meeting held on June 27, 2001. The next public informational open house is anticipated for the summer of 2002.

Periodic scoping meetings will be held to obtain public input as part of the project’s environmental review process. During the circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement, an open house will be held to gather comments on the environmental document. These comments will be considered in developing the Final Environmental Impact Report/Statement and in selecting the preferred alternative. Additional open houses will be hosted as needed to keep the public abreast of the project status and to answer questions. All of the technical documents, including the Draft Relocation Impact Report, will be made available for review during the review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement.

A project web page has been created to provide project information and updates. A new detailed project map has been posted. The web site address is:
http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist3/departments/planning/HoplandBypass/Hopland_Bypass.html

Also, a layout showing the routes of each of the project alternatives is on display for public viewing at the Caltrans Hopland Construction field office, located on the bottom floor of the Brutaco Cellars building in Hopland.

If you have comments or questions about the Hopland Bypass, mail them to: Alan Escarda, 1656 Union Street, Eureka, CA 95502 or email at Alan_Escarda@dot.ca.gov.



Schedule

- Public Circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report: Summer 2003
- Public Hearing: Summer 2003
- Approve Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report: Summer 2004
- Approve Project Report: Winter 2005
- Record of Decision/Notice of Determination: Summer 2004
- Begin Property Acquisition: Summer 2005
- Begin Construction: Spring 2009
- End Construction: Winter 2011

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